

How to Operate Your Brain

By Timothy Leary

This is an experiment in mind formation, in-formation, forming, controlling, operating your mind and your brain, using digital techniques to overload, scramble, confuse, unfocus your mind.

The natural state of the brain is chaos. We're dealing with a complexity of in-information. The first thing to do is to overwhelm your focused mind, your linear mind, by overloading signals, digital patterns, clusters of photons and electrons which produce a pleasant state of confused chaos. This is the state of the brain when it is ready to be informed, that is, to be reprogrammed.

The human brain contains one hundred billion neurons, each neuron is as powerful as a large computer, and each neuron has around ten thousand connections with other neurons. Within our foreheads there is a chaos, inside our brains there is a galaxy of information, which is incomprehensible to our linear minds.

This contrasts and compares perfectly with the chaos without. We're living in a universe, which has one hundred billion galaxies, each galaxy with star systems, planets, a complexity, again, which to our minds right now is chaotic, incomprehensible.

Chaos is beautiful. Now many times we are afraid because we want order. We can't deal with the confusion and disorder. We want form. We want rules. Yes, throughout human history there have been people—religious leaders, political leaders—who will give you order. They will give you rules and commandments.

But chaos is basically good. Relax. Surf the waves of chaos and learn how to redesign your own realities. Sit back. Flow. Open your eyes. Turn off your minds. Unfocus, and let the waves of chaos roll over your brain. Float. Drift. Zoom. Design. Create new order, your order, your style from chaos.

Yes. Yes. Chaos. Yes, yes, chaos . . .

The aim of human life is to know thyself. Think for yourself. Question authority. Think with your friends. Create, create new realities. Philosophy is a team sport. Philosophy is the ultimate, the ultimate aphrodisiac pleasure. Learning how to operate your brain, learning how to operate your mind, learning how to redesign chaos.

The religious leaders, the political leaders want to give you orders to run your life, to determine how you think. The basic goal is to operate your own mind. Think for yourself.

Around three thousand years ago, a group of human beings in Athens, Greece, developed a new philosophy, a basic religion of humanity that is called humanism. Socrates said that the aim of human life is to know thyself. Create and design your own order from chaos. Socrates did not give commandments. Socrates did not impose order. Socrates asked questions. He encouraged his friends to speculate, design, to create, to interact their own versions of reality. Socrates said the way to perform philosophy is in small groups, raising questions, learning from each other, changing, changing your mind, growing together, thinking together.

The religious leaders said "You can't say that, Socrates. The gods are in control. Who are you to say you have a self? How dare you think you can know? The Gods determine. Sacrifice to the gods; obey the gods." Socrates said, "No. Look within." For that, they gave Socrates the hemlock, because he dared to tell people, "Think for yourself. Question authority."

To think for yourself, you must learn how to reprogram, reform, inform your own brain. To do this, to take responsibility for your brain, it is necessary to question everything that you have been taught, to question authority, to learn to take the brave step of taking responsibility for operating your brain. For designing, redesigning, reforming the chaos within.

Throughout human history, as our species has faced the frightening, terrorizing fact that we do not know who we are or where we are going in this ocean of chaos, it has been the authorities—the political, the religious, the educational authorities—who attempted to comfort us by giving us order, rules, regulations, informing—forming in our minds—THEIR view of reality. To think for yourself, you must question authority and learn how to put yourself in a state of vulnerable open-mindedness, chaotic, confused vulnerability to inform yourself.

Think for yourself. Question authority.

Then came Marshall McLuhan, in the 1950's. McLuhan said, in the Socratic sense, "The medium is the message." The words you use, the modes of communication you use determine the realities you inhabit. Most of our lives, most of us live in realities determined by others, imprinted in our brains by education, by religion, by politics, by the authorities. McLuhan said, "If you want to change your mind, change the medium." Change the words you use. Change the mode of communication. If you change the medium, you change yourself. You change your society.

In the 1960's, a new mode of communication developed: television. The kids growing up in the 1950's learned how to tune in, turn on, fine tune, turn off, select, determine what hits your eyeballs. You control your eyeballs and your eardrums. You direct, manage the media that program your brain. McLuhan said, "Who controls the media is programming your mind and programming your brain."

We are using in this tape the new media of digital, multimedia, audiographic overload, attempting to create the state of open-mindedness, pleasant vulnerability in which we will in-form and imprint the messages of The Sponsor: "Use your head. Learn how to operate your brain."

To operate your brain you must understand how to use your eyes. "Oh say, can you see?" Oh say, can't you see what is being done to your eyes? Who controls your eyeballs, controls your mind, imprints your brain. Oh say, can't you see that the messages that hit your eyeballs in modern television are creating realities, imprinting messages from the sponsors who are not usually interested in your learning how to design your own realities.

Warning! Warning! Warning! Who controls your screen controls the programs in your mind. Your eyes are the windows of your brain. The eyes are extensions of the brain. The eyes are made up of hundreds of layers of neurons, rods, cones. Your eyeballs deal with one energy: It's light. Through your eyes come illumination, vision, perception, enlightenment, illumination. Your eyes are the windows of your soul. Who controls your eyeballs programs your brain. Learn how to dial, fine tune your eyeballs. Learn how to unfocus your eyes, dilate your pupils, learn how to open up to illumination and light, and then refocus and redesign your own inner order, your own designs, your own language.

In the 60's, we said. "Power to the people." In the 90's, the digital multimedia 90's, we say, "Power to the pupil."

Illuminate. Enlighten. Envision. Light waves. Sound waves. Light waves. Open eyes. Open mind. Open your brain. Learn how to send messages using electrons. Your brain loves light. Who controls your eyeballs programs your mind.

We are also passing on, in this demonstration, the message of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the first and probably the greatest American philosopher who said, "Divinity lies within." Don't look to the churches or to the big marble institutions. Your divinity lies within. You must learn to operate your brain, operate your soul. Learn how to communicate brain to brain, soul to soul with other people. Your divinity lies within.

The brain is designed to design realities. If you operate your own brain skillfully, you can learn to design your own realities, learn how to communicate in the language of the brain: electrons and photons. We are doing this now. We are sending messages from our brains, using the vehicle of electrons and photons, to your eyeballs. As we watch this screen, our minds are bedazzled, our minds are softened, our linear, sharp logical thinking is gentled, and we are communicating brain to brain. We are using the electron, computer circuits, to feed each other's brains with light.

This is the first paragraph, the first attempt, the first child's primer in how to communicate using both the orderly left brain and the chaotic, confusing language of photons and electrons. The brain is a photovore. Your brain, my brain, our brains live on light. Just as the body needs air and carbohydrates, our brains are starved for light, for illumination, for revelation.

Use your head. Learn how to operate your brain. The brain is designed to design realities.

Marshall McLuhan made the prophecy. He told us that the aim of evolution was to use media to create what we all want: the global village, the language, which can be understood by every human being, by every brain. The basic language of humanity, the language of the brain, lights, sounds, rhythms, pulsating your bones, moving your body. We all know this language. We can all sing and dance this language of electrons, of radio waves, of rhythms.

Now we have digital communication. We can create our fantasies. We can create our rhythms, design on screen. A new language will develop, a global language, not based on letters, not based on grammars, the language which we all understand, based on clusters of waves of light and sound. We all understand. We all celebrate. We all glory in the light, the illumination, the contact, the intersection, the interaction from around the world, the language of form. We will create a language of international, global brain linkup. Anyone in any culture watching this screen will get the general picture. It's one global village. It's one global human spirit, one global human race. As we link up through screens, linked by electrons and photons, we will create for the first time a global humanity, not separated by words or minds or nationalities or religious biases.

Now listen to The Message from The Sponsor: "There is one, global human race."

We're just now learning to communicate brain to brain, soul to soul.